

TEAM-Up study sees PV gaining foothold

TEAM-UP, a public-private investment program to jump-start the U.S. market for solar electricity, recently released an analysis of solar marketing technique. According to the study, consumer-friendly products and the selective use of solar power to offset expensive peak power and retail electric costs are among the ways solar power is gaining a foothold in the mainstream energy market.

The Utility PhotoVoltaic Group, a non-profit association of more than 90 energy services providers, produced the study, titled "4.5 Megawatts of PV and Counting: Technical and Business Experiences of TEAM-UP Program Partnerships." The study describes results of the first two rounds of solar electric projects launched under the UPVG-managed TEAM-UP program. Under the program, venture teams receive cost-share funds from the U.S. Department of Energy for installing PV technologies.

The experiences of the TEAM-UP business ventures show that PV is most readily adopted where it is sold more like an appliance—increasingly in standardized packages—than a power generator. In addition, utilities are finding customers respond enthusiastically

to well-designed "green-pricing" plans where customers can choose to have part of their electricity needs supplied by clean solar energy.

The "4.5 Megawatts of PV and Counting" study details how solar power increasingly is valued by utilities and customers as a distributed energy resource. As such, utilities are more inclined to use PV to offset high-cost electricity generated by conventional sources during times of peak demand.

An important trend seen in the TEAM-UP program is an increasing number of systems being placed on customer property, right where power is consumed. Previously, many experts believed that solar electric systems would achieve commercial adoption of custom-designed, large-scale powerplants sited on utility property.

In addition to presenting a number of case studies of venture teams, the study also analyzes the experiences of the TEAM-UP program participants in six major areas:

- ◆ PV business model development
- ◆ PV systems design and procurement
- ◆ PV systems installation and operation
- ◆ PV marketing
- ◆ PV utility perspectives
- ◆ Cross-cutting issues

For more information on TEAM-UP and the "4.5 Megawatt and Counting" study, visit the UPVG's web site at <http://www.upvg.org/>.

